

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing enhanced calling services comprising:

interfacing a first communication device to an asynchronous network;

interfacing a second communication device to said asynchronous network;

interfacing an interactive response process to said asynchronous network, wherein

said interactive response process is adapted to directly utilize packet network protocols;

establishing a first signaling channel associated with said first communication device
and said interactive response process;

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said first signaling
channel, a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said second
communication device to thereby provide a call; and

directing a third media stream from said interactive response process to said first
communication device during a time in which said first media stream is directed to said
second communication device.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

establishing a second signaling channel associated with said second communication
device and said interactive response process; and

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said second
signaling channel, a second media stream associated with said second communication device
to said first communication device.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said directing of said third media stream
provides said third media stream to said first communication device in a whisper
communication mode such that said second communication device does not receive content
of said third media stream.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said whisper communication mode provides a caller at said first communication device information with respect to a status of said call.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein said whisper communication mode solicits a response from said first communication device.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said response comprises payment authorization information.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein said response is transmitted to said interactive response process through said first signaling channel.

8. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
directing a fourth media stream from said interactive response process to said second communication device during a time in which said second media stream is directed to said first communication device.

9. The method of claim 8, the method of claim d, wherein said call is provided at a reduced rate at least in part as a function of said third and fourth media streams being directed to said first and second communication devices.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein content of said third and fourth media streams comprise an advertising message.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein at least one of said first and second communication devices is provided the opportunity to opt out of receiving a respective one of said third and fourth media streams.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein opting out by said at least one of said first and second communication devices is signaled to said interactive response process through a corresponding one of said first and second signaling channels.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein opting out by said at least one of said first and second communication devices results in a call surcharge levied against said one of said first and said second communication devices opting out of receiving said respective one of said third and fourth media streams.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein content of said third media stream is different than content of said fourth media stream.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said different content of said first media stream comprises information with respect to a status of said call.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said different content of said first media stream solicits a response from said first communication device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said response comprises payment authorization information.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said response is transmitted to said interactive response process through said first signaling channel.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein said different content of said first media stream comprises information selected as a function of demographic information associated with said first communication device.

20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

directing a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said interactive response process;

accepting said first media stream by said interactive response process;

generating a response media stream by said interactive response process responsive to said first media stream;

directing said response media stream to said first communication device;

accepting information from said first communication device via said first signaling channel; and

controlling said directing of said first media stream to said second communication device as a function of said accepted information to thereby redirect said first media stream from said interactive response process to said second communication device.

21. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

interfacing a third communication device to said asynchronous network;

replicating said first media stream to thereby provide a second media stream; and

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said first signaling channel, said second media stream to said third communication device during a time in which said first media stream is directed to said second communication device.

22. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

replicating said first media stream to thereby provide a fourth media stream;

directing said fourth media stream to said interactive response process during a time in which said first media stream is directed to said second communication device; and

recording said fourth media stream by said interactive response process.

23. A method for providing enhanced calling services comprising:
interfacing a first communication device to an asynchronous network;
interfacing a second communication device to said asynchronous network;
interfacing an interactive response process to said asynchronous network, wherein

5 said interactive response process is adapted to directly utilize packet network protocols;
establishing a first signaling channel associated with said first communication device
and said interactive response process;

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said first signaling
channel, a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said second
communication device to thereby provide a call;

replicating said first media stream to thereby provide a third media stream;

directing said third media stream to said interactive response process during a time in
which said first media stream is directed to said second communication device; and

recording said third media stream by said interactive response process.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

said first communication device signaling said interactive response process through
said first signaling channel and during a time in which said first media stream is directed to
said second communication device to commence recording said third media stream, wherein
5 said replicating said first media stream is performed under control of said interactive response
process responsive to said signaling from said first communication device to commence
recording said third media stream.

25. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

establishing a second signaling channel associated with said second communication device and said interactive response process; and

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said second signaling channel, a second media stream associated with said second communication device to said first communication device.

24. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

replicating said second media stream to thereby provide a fourth media stream;

directing said fourth media stream to said interactive response process during a time in which said second media stream is directed to said first communication device; and recording said fourth media stream by said interactive response process.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said third and fourth media streams are summed prior to recording.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein said third media stream is recorded discrete from said fourth media stream.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein said recorded third media stream is transmitted to a user associated with at least one of said first communication device and said second communication device, wherein said transmission of said recorded third media stream is separate from said first and second signaling channels and said first and second media streams.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein said transmission of said recorded third media stream includes transmission through a computer network.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet.

30. The method of claim 27, wherein said transmission of said recorded third media stream includes e-mail transmission.

31. The method of claim 23, wherein said recorded third media stream is transmitted to a user associated with said first communication device and a user associated with said second communication device.

32. The method of claim 23, wherein said recorded third media stream is transmitted to a user device different than said first communication device and said second communication device.

33. The method of claim 23, wherein recording of said third media stream is in a standardized format adapted for general utilization.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein said standardized format is a digital audio format commonly known as a wave file.

35. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

directing a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said interactive response process;

accepting said first media stream by said interactive response process;

generating a response media stream by said interactive response process responsive to said first media stream;

directing said response media stream to said first communication device;

accepting information from said first communication device via said first signaling channel; and

controlling said directing of said first media stream to said second communication device as a function of said accepted information to thereby redirect said first media stream from said interactive response process to said second communication device.

36. The method of claim 23, comprising:

interfacing a third communication device to said asynchronous network;

replicating said first media stream to thereby provide a second media stream; and

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said first signaling channel, said second media stream to said third communication device during a time in which said first media stream is directed to said second communication device.

37. A method for providing enhanced calling services comprising:

interfacing a plurality of communication devices to an asynchronous network;

interfacing an interactive response process to said asynchronous network, wherein said interactive response process is adapted to directly utilize packet network protocols;

5 directing a first media stream associated with a first communication device of said plurality of communication devices to said interactive response process;

accepting said first media stream by said interactive response process;

determining at least two communication devices of said plurality of communication devices for use in communication as a function of said accepted first media stream;

10 directing a second media stream from said interactive response process to a second communication device of said plurality of communication devices, wherein said second communication device is one of said at least two communication devices of said plurality of communication devices; and

15 directing, during a time in which said second media stream is directed from said interactive response process to said second communication device, a third media stream from said interactive response process to a third communication device of said plurality of communication devices, wherein said third communication device is one of said at least two communication devices of said plurality of communication devices.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said determining at least two communication devices as a function of said accepted first media stream is based at least in part on a dialed number associated with said accepted first media stream.

39. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

establishing a first signaling channel associated with said first communication device and said interactive response process;

generating a response media stream by said interactive response process responsive to said first media stream;

directing said response media stream to said first communication device; and

accepting information from said first communication device via said first signaling channel responsive to said response media stream, wherein said determining at least two communication devices as a function of said accepted first media stream is based at least in part on said information.

40. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

directing a fourth media stream from said interactive response process to said first communication device, wherein said fourth media stream includes information with respect to a status of communications with respect to at least one of said second and third communication devices.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein said fourth media stream includes information soliciting a response from a user of said first communication device regarding further communications.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein said response is communicated through said first signaling channel.

43. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

providing a hierarchy of communication devices, wherein communication devices of a first level of said hierarchy have a media stream directed thereto by said interactive response unit before communication devices of a second level of said hierarchy.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein said second communication device and said third communication devices are associated with different levels of said hierarchy.

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45. A method for providing enhanced calling services comprising:

interfacing a first communication device to an asynchronous network;

interfacing a second communication device to said asynchronous network;

interfacing an interactive response process to said asynchronous network, wherein

5 said interactive response process is adapted to directly utilize packet network protocols;

interfacing an operator system to said interactive response process;

establishing a first signaling channel associated with said first communication device
and said interactive response process;

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said first signaling
channel, a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said second
communication device;

receiving at said interactive response process signaling information from said first
communication device indicating a desire to communicate with said operator system;

15 redirecting, under control of said interactive response process using said first
signaling channel, said first media stream associated with said first communication device
from said second communication device to said operator system; and

directing a third media stream from said operator system to said first communication
device.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein said operator system provides automated
operator functions.

47. The method of claim 45, wherein said operator system provides live operator
interaction.

48. The method of claim 45, wherein said first media stream redirected to said
operator system is directed from said first communication device through said interactive
response process to said operator system.

49. The method of claim 45, further comprising:

establishing a second signaling channel associated with said second communication device and said interactive response process;

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said second signaling channel, a second media stream associated with said second communication device to said first communication device during a time in which said first media stream is directed from said first communication device to said second communication device.

50. The method of claim 49, wherein said interactive response process tears down said second media stream directed to said first communication device when said first media stream is redirected to said operator system.

51. The method of claim 50, wherein a fourth media stream is directed to said second communication device from said interactive response process during a time in which said first media stream is redirected to said operator system

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said fourth media stream does not include content from either of said first media stream or said third media stream.

53. The method of claim 45, further comprising:

establishing a second signaling channel associated with said second communication device and said interactive response process;

directing, under control of said interactive response process using said second signaling channel, a second media stream associated with said second communication device to said operator system, wherein said interactive response process tears down said first media stream directed to interactive response process during a time in which said second media stream is redirected to said operator system.

54. The method of claim 45, further comprising:

directing a first media stream associated with said first communication device to said interactive response process;

accepting said first media stream by said interactive response process;

generating a response media stream by said interactive response process responsive to said first media stream;

directing said response media stream to said first communication device;

accepting information from said first communication device via said first signaling channel; and

controlling said directing of said first media stream to said second communication device as a function of said accepted information to thereby redirect said first media stream from said interactive response process to said second communication device.

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55. A method for providing enhanced calling services comprising:

interfacing a number of communication devices to an asynchronous network, wherein a plurality of said number of communication devices include call control functionality;

directing a first media stream associated with at least one of a first communication device of said number of communication devices and a second communication device of said number of communication devices to the other one of said first and second communication devices under control of said call control functionality associated with said first communication device; and

directing a second media stream associated with at least one of said first communication device, said second communication device, and a third communication device of said number of communication devices to at least one of said first, second, and third communication devices under control of said call control functionality associated with said second communication device.

56. The method of claim 55, further comprising:

establishing a first signaling channel associated with said first communication device and said second communication device; and

establishing a second signaling channel associated with said second communication device and said third communication device.

57. The method of claim 56, wherein information with respect to directing said first media stream is communicated through said first signaling channel.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein information with respect to directing said second media stream is communicated through said second signaling channel.

59. The method of claim 55, wherein at least one of said first, second, and third communication devices comprises a general purpose processor based system.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein said general purpose processor based system is a multimedia computer.

61. The method of claim 55, wherein at least one of said first, second, and third communication devices comprises a processor based telephone system adapted to directly utilized packetized data.

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